

# BASIN BULLETIN



Updates on the Coeur d'Alene River Basin Cleanup

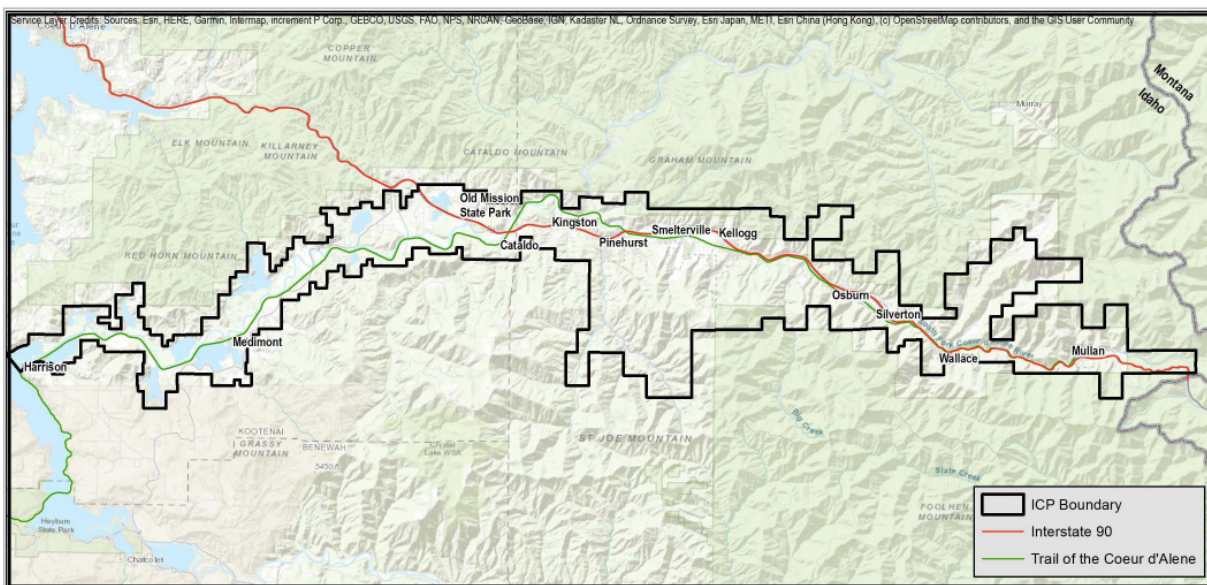
July 2021

## Free blood-lead screening for kids + \$40 incentive

Panhandle Health District is offering its annual free blood lead screening in Kellogg, Idaho, **August 9 - 14, 2021**. Blood lead screening is the only sure way to know whether your children have been exposed to lead. The screenings will be held at the Shoshone Medical Center by appointment. Everyone is encouraged to come in, learn more, and get tested. Children ages six months to six years, living within the Institutional Controls Program boundary (see map), will receive the screening at no cost, plus a \$40 incentive. The screening is done by a simple finger-prick, along with participation in a short lead exposure questionnaire. It typically takes 15-20 minutes per person with results available right away. If the result shows over 5 micrograms of lead per deciliter or greater, a blood draw is necessary to confirm. It can be performed immediately, on-site. If results are consistent with the finger prick, PHD recommends the child's physician be notified. PHD will also make an appointment for a home visit to test for and attempt to identify the source(s) of the lead.



Lead exposure can cause severe health problems, especially for young children and pregnant women. Heavy metals-contaminated soils are being cleaned up, but people can still come into contact with lead. Lead screenings are not always included in a child's regular physical. PHD's efforts to identify levels above 5 micrograms per deciliter will allow families, doctors, and communities to act earlier to reduce and eliminate further lead exposure. Call 208-783-0707 to make your appointment.





## Protect your family's health: get your property tested

Property cleanups reduce exposure to lead and other metals, protecting people's health – especially children. Children under 7 years of age and/or pregnant or nursing women have the highest risk for health effects from lead exposure. Properties with these residents are prioritized for both sampling and cleanup. During a property remediation, generally the top 6-12 inches of contaminated soil is removed and replaced with clean material or a barrier such as grass. More than 7,000 properties have been cleaned up to date in the Box and Basin. These include residential and commercial properties, rights-of-way, and private drinking water sources. Properties remaining to be sampled and/or



cleaned up are those whose owners have refused access, or who have not responded to contact attempts by the CDA Work Trust and IDEQ. Currently, around 200 eligible properties in the Upper and Lower Basin require sampling. Based on previous sampling and statistical estimates, we expect that about 80 properties in the Basin would require cleanup. In the Box, nine properties remain to be cleaned up. If you believe your property may be eligible and you'd like to have it sampled for mining-related metals, please see contact below.

CONTACT: **IDEQ** • 208-783-5781, or **Kyle Richards**, Coeur d'Alene Work Trust • 208-783-0222.

### 'The Box' and the Basin

The Coeur d'Alene Basin Cleanup is one of the nation's largest and most complex Superfund sites. This site is divided into areas for manageable cleanup. One such area is known as "The Box" – a 21-square-mile area surrounding the historic smelter area. The Box includes the Shoshone County cities of Kellogg, Wardner, Smelterville, and Pinehurst. Much of the Box has been cleaned up. The part of the site outside of the Box where mining contamination is being addressed is called "the Basin." Unsafe lead levels are still a concern in some areas of the Basin.

### Lake study continues

On May 4-6, EPA participated in the second set of public meetings hosted by the National Academies of Sciences regarding their study of Coeur d'Alene Lake. The study will help NAS form recommendations to address water quality concerns. During the meetings, NAS heard a presentation from IDEQ on their phosphorus inventory. USGS reported on previous studies of Lake Coeur d'Alene and on current water quality monitoring in the Basin. Scientists from the University of Idaho and the University of Washington presented climate change and forest fire impacts to regional and lake water quality. EPA provided a preliminary look at the upgraded Central Treatment Plant removal efficiency of heavy metals and phosphorous.



The next public session hosted by the National Academy of Sciences is July 19. Details on the session can be found at the link below.

The State of Idaho and Kootenai County are financial sponsors of the \$776,000 NAS study. EPA contributed \$20,000 in non-Superfund funds. The Coeur d'Alene Tribe is also supporting the study with technical expertise. EPA supports this effort to evaluate non-point sources impacting lake water quality. We look forward to the NAS recommendations as we all work for a cleaner, safer lake. Visit <https://bit.ly/3AABDPS>.

## Sampling at Dredge Road and South River Road Properties

This summer, the Coeur d'Alene Trust, under EPA's direction, will begin soil sampling at the Trust's Dredge Road property in the Lower Coeur d'Alene River Basin. The property is two miles west of Cataldo, on the north side of Interstate 90. Sampling will help us evaluate how suitable the property is for various future uses.

Sampling will last about 7-10 days. Data collection will also take place this fall as needed to support the investigations. You may see trucks, drill rigs, and other equipment on the property. Soil sampling will take place at a later date at the South River Road property near Rose Lake and the Dudley Reach area, off Highway 3.

What to know about the properties:

From 1932-1968, a suction dredge operated in the Coeur d'Alene River near the boat launch. Over its life, the dredge removed about 34.5 million tons of sediments contaminated with mine tailings from the Coeur d'Alene River. These contaminated sediments were deposited in a tailings pond on Mission Flats, covering an area of about 2,000 acres to a depth of 25-30 feet. The Dredge Road property is within this area, which contains high levels of lead and other metals. The South River Road Property investigation will focus on whether materials such as soil and rock are suitable for use in future Trust projects, potential property usability, and will check to see if contamination exists at the property.

No decisions have been made yet for how the properties will be used. The Trust is often looking for properties from which to obtain soil, gravel, and larger rock, or as locations to place contaminated materials in protectively engineered waste repositories (Waste Consolidation Areas). The properties could also provide an area to keep equipment needed for future work. Properties such as these are essential to completing our cleanup projects. We need to conduct investigations to determine their suitability.

CONTACT: **Patrick Hickey**, EPA • [hickey.patrick@epa.gov](mailto:hickey.patrick@epa.gov) • 206-553-6295 • 800-424-4372 ext. 6295.



### Looking Ahead: Dudley Reach Riverbed Project, Lower Basin

The CDA Trust and EPA are scoping plans for a project in the Coeur d'Alene River's Dudley Reach. The project will address riverbed contamination. It is the first "pilot" project within the river channel in the Lower Basin. A pilot is basically a learning project to help inform our approach to cleaning up contamination. It will help us learn more about working in the river channel and evaluate ways to prevent mine waste from moving downstream, while we get some cleanup done. We can apply those lessons to future efforts.

The exact location of the project is not yet set. Right now, we are focusing on a half-mile area about two miles downstream of the Mission Boat Ramp. The area includes a large scour hole on the river bottom with high levels of mining-related waste. Sampling and coring found that lead in the riverbed sediment in this area regularly flows downstream during high runoff events. Metals contamination is widespread throughout the area.

For now, we are considering a dredging and capping approach. We may modify our approach as we get new information. Dredging will require waste consolidation areas to be sited and constructed in the Lower Basin.

We are now learning as much as we can about this site. Project design will likely occur in 2022 and 2023. Procurement and construction are expected in 2024 and 2025.

CONTACT: **Ed Moreen**, EPA • [moreen.ed@epa.gov](mailto:moreen.ed@epa.gov) • 208-664-4588.



## Five-Year Review schedule: CDA Basin Cleanup

You may be aware that EPA is extending completion of its fifth Five-Year Review of the Bunker Hill Superfund Site, also called the “Coeur d’Alene Basin Cleanup.” We expect to complete the Five-Year Review and release the final report by this fall. The review checks to make sure the cleanup is protecting people’s health and the environment. EPA reviews Superfund cleanups every five years after a cleanup decision is issued, even when active cleanup is ongoing. In January 2020, we invited you to share information about the site that could help with this review. In response to several requests, we extended our public input period through April 30, 2020. Thank you to everyone who provided input. EPA received over 400 emails and letters. Most of these expressed concern about Lake Coeur d’Alene and its water quality, and requested EPA conduct a Remedial Investigation and select a remedy for the lake. As a remedy has not yet been selected for Lake Coeur d’Alene, an evaluation of its performance will not be included in the Five-Year Review report. However, we will include a discussion of lake activities and studies that have been conducted since the 2015 Five-Year Review in the report’s appendices.

CONTACT: **Tamara Langton**, EPA • [langton.tamara@epa.gov](mailto:langton.tamara@epa.gov) • 206-553-2709 (desk) • 206-473-7663 (cell).

## Update: Gray’s Meadow agriculture to wetland conversion project

We are getting close to implementing the next phase of the Gray’s Meadow Project. The 90-percent design review documents for the Lamb Peak (west) field *Infrastructure Improvements Phase* have started to circulate among stakeholders. We expect to go out to bid this summer for fall construction. This phase will address three primary project needs:

1. Improve the access road that runs along the Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes between the Cave Lake (east) and Lamb Peak (west) fields.
2. Replace the inadequate bridge that spans the Black Lake tie channel with a new bridge.
3. Relocate Lamb Peak water transfer infrastructure and discharge point.

The Lamb Peak pumps will be moved closer to the CDA River and mouth of the tie channel. Pump discharge will be moved to a small channel next to the Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes and eventually discharge to the CDA River. A new gravity drain water control structure for use during low river water conditions will discharge to the tie channel. The design team has worked with water quality experts at IDEQ and the Coeur d’Alene Tribe, and the changes are expected to improve (but not resolve) long-standing water quality issues in Black Lake.

Remediation and restoration remain in the 60% design phase and should be ready for stakeholder review in early fall.

CONTACT: **Kim Prestbo**, EPA • [prestbo.kim@epa.gov](mailto:prestbo.kim@epa.gov) • 206-553-0239 • 800-424-4372, ext. 0239.



*Existing bridge across Black Lake tie channel.*

## Protecting people's health at local recreation areas



Removing contamination and posting health signs at recreational sites is an important part of the Coeur d'Alene Basin Cleanup. Many metals-contaminated sites are used by swimmers, fishers, campers, and boaters in the warm summer months. In April, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality completed a cleanup at the Theater Bridge site in Smelterville. Crews hauled 2,300 cubic yards of contaminated material to Page Repository for disposal. IDEQ also used gravel to cap contamination near the airport, creating a clean access and parking area. Over the years, EPA and its partners have placed dozens of health signs at recreational areas and along the river. This spring, EPA and partners sent packets with lead health information to over 200 property owners. IDEQ, EPA, and the Coeur d'Alene Trust are also sampling soils at a few recreation locations this field season. While you're out enjoying our beautiful environment

this summer, remember to Play Clean! Follow tips on the health signs and limit your exposure to soils and sediments.

CONTACT: **Bonnie Arthur**, EPA, [arthur.bonnie@epa.gov](mailto:arthur.bonnie@epa.gov), 206-553-4072, 800-424-4372 ext. 4072.

## Upper Basin cleanup in full swing

The 2021 field season is in full swing in the Upper CDA River Basin! The CDA Work Trust is performing the work, under EPA's direction. Over the years, we've been removing metals-contaminated materials from old mine and mill sites. This source control work prevents the contaminants from washing downstream, improving water quality and reducing exposures for people and wildlife.

In Canyon Creek Basin, in June, work crews started investigations at seven new projects: Gem Complex, Standard Mammoth Reach, Ajax No. 3, Canyon Creek Garbage Dump, Marsh Mine, and Oneill Gulch Unnamed Rock Dump. Limited fieldwork will take place at Tamarack #7, Black Bear Fraction/Flynn Mine, and Hecla Star Complex. Crews are drilling borings and monitoring wells, digging test pits, and collecting soil, surface water, and groundwater samples. EPA expects this summer's work will wrap up in September. Read more about the Canyon Creek Basin 2021 Field Work at <https://go.usa.gov/x6F6A>.



In Ninemile Basin, in June, crews started preparing for hauling 30,000 cubic yards of mine waste from the upper portion of the Lower East Fork Ninemile Creek Riparian Site. The waste contains lead and other metals that pose risks to people and the environment. It will be placed in the East Fork Ninemile Waste Consolidation Area, near the top of East Fork Ninemile Canyon. Groundwater and surface water sampling will continue at the waste consolidation area. In early August, we will start an investigation in the Lower Ninemile Creek drainage. Crews will be digging test pits and collecting surface soil samples. The investigation will help us understand the nature and extent of contamination at this location. It will determine the need for a cleanup design that protects people and wildlife, and improves water quality.

We expect work will wrap up in early October. For more details, go to: <https://go.usa.gov/x6F6h>. EPA will work closely with the Trust to incorporate up-to-date guidance on reducing the risk of contracting COVID-19 during site work.

CONTACTS: **Bonnie Arthur**, EPA, [arthur.bonnie@epa.gov](mailto:arthur.bonnie@epa.gov) • 206-553-4072 • 800-424-4372, ext. 4072.

**Jennifer Crawford**, EPA • [crawford.jennifer@epa.gov](mailto:crawford.jennifer@epa.gov) • 206-553-6261 • 800-424-4372, ext. 6261.

*We know this work poses an inconvenience to residents. Thank you for your patience while we complete these projects. Please contact us if you have concerns.*



## Construction progresses in Canyon Creek

Construction is underway at the *Canyon Complex Repository/Waste Consolidation Area* in Canyon Creek. This area is next to the old, failing “Silver Valley Natural Resource Trustees repository.” Waste is being moved from the old repository to the new WCA. Last year, crews built the WCA foundation. To support WCA construction, the Trust purchased a 23-acre parcel last year to use as a quarry, 2.7 miles to the east. It supplies clean construction materials, gravel, and road surfacing materials for this and other cleanup projects in the Canyon Creek Basin. This year, about 500,000 cubic yards of old SVNRT mine waste is being moved into the new area. Work will wrap up in November. A new drainage system will be expanded into the old SVNRT area next year. The facility will be ready to take in waste from other mine and mill cleanup sites in the Canyon Creek area in 2023. When finished, the new WCA will be able to hold about 1.8 million cubic yards. Facilities like this one reduce health risks from metals like lead and arsenic.



CONTACT: **Bonnie Arthur**, EPA • [arthur.bonnie@epa.gov](mailto:arthur.bonnie@epa.gov) • 206-553-4072, 800-424-4372, ext. 4072.

## Sampling continues at Douglas Mine and Mill Site

This year, crews are performing ongoing water sampling at the old Douglas Mine and Mill. Sampling will check on water quality. Monitoring wells are being sampled several times during the year at varying water levels. The data collection will inform a cleanup design that will protect people’s health and the environment. Construction is slated to start and finish in 2022. The Douglas Mine and Mill Site is located along the East Fork of Pine Creek, south of Pinehurst.

Most recently, visitors have used the Douglas site for recreational activities like motorcycle and ATV riding, camping, and target shooting, despite the property being privately owned. These activities pose health risks, because metals in the dust and soil can be breathed in or swallowed. Metals-contaminated materials along the creek can dissolve, and harm water quality.



CONTACT: **Patrick Hickey**, EPA • [hickey.patrick@epa.gov](mailto:hickey.patrick@epa.gov) • 206-553-6295  
• 800-424-4372, ext. 6295.

## You’re invited: tour of Upper Basin cleanup projects, August 18

The Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission invites you to its annual cleanup tour. Set for **August 18**, the free tour will visit cleanup projects in Ninemile and Canyon Creek Basins, including the Canyon Complex Repository/Waste Consolidation Area. Buses will depart from Wallace, Idaho, about 12:45 p.m. and return to Wallace later in the afternoon. You will have a chance to hear from project staff, learn about the environmental cleanup, and see local projects first-hand. Rest stops along the way and water will be provided. Feel free to bring a sack lunch. Before the tour, during the morning hours, the Commission will conduct its quarterly meeting. Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting and/or the tour. Watch for firm times and specific locations in the local papers or visit [www.basincommission.com](http://www.basincommission.com).

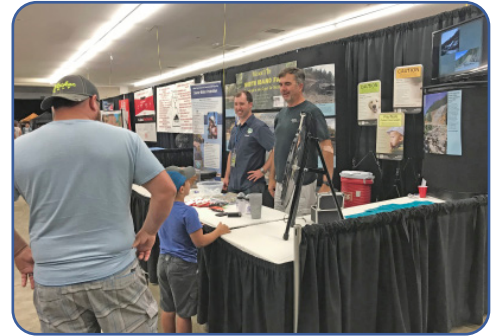


CONTACT: **Terry Harwood**, BEIPC Executive Director • 208-783-2528 • [terry.harwood@deq.idaho.gov](mailto:terry.harwood@deq.idaho.gov).

## Come to the North Idaho Fair

Representatives from Panhandle Health District, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and the Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission will be hosting a booth at the North Idaho Fair this year from **August 20-29**. Stop by and meet some of the people working in the Bunker Hill Superfund Site and spin the wheel to win a prize! The booth will be located inside Building 1. We can't wait to see you! The fair's web site is at <https://www.nisfair.fun>.

*EPA does not endorse any non-government websites, companies, internet applications or any policies or information expressed therein.*



## To Find Documents

### North Idaho College Library

Molstead Library  
1000 Garden Avenue – Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814  
208-769-3355

### Wallace Public Library

415 River Street – Wallace, ID 83873  
208-752-4571

### Spokane Public Library

906 West Main Avenue – Spokane, WA 99201  
509-444-5336

### EPA Field Office

1910 Northwest Boulevard, Suite 210  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814  
208-664-4588

### EPA Seattle Office

Superfund Record Center  
1200 Sixth Avenue – Seattle, WA 98101  
206-553-4494 or 800-424-4372

### St. Maries Library

822 W. College Avenue – St. Maries, ID 83861  
208-245-3732

### Kellogg Public Library

16 West Market Avenue – Kellogg, ID 83837  
208-786-7231

## Opportunities to Get Involved

### Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission (BEIPC)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Terry Harwood  
208-783-2528 • [www.basincommission.com](http://www.basincommission.com)

### Citizens Coordinating Council (CCC)

CHAIR: Jerry Boyd • 509-220-1453  
<http://www.basincommission.com/cc>

The Basin Bulletin is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency three times a year. The Basin Bulletin offers updates on the Superfund cleanup in the Coeur d'Alene Basin. For mailing list changes, to send comments on this newsletter, contact the editors, or submit articles for consideration, contact Debra Sherbina as noted. Mention of trade names, products, or services does not convey, and should not be interpreted as conveying, official EPA approval, endorsement, or recommendation.

### Alternative formats are available.

For reasonable accommodation, please call  
☎ Debra Sherbina • 206-553-0247.

📠 TTY users, please call the Federal Relay  
Service at 800-877-8339.



## EPA Community Involvement Contact

Debra Sherbina

☎ [sherbina.debra@epa.gov](mailto:sherbina.debra@epa.gov) ☎ 1-800-424-4372 ext. 0247



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## ***Want Timely Updates? Visit us on Facebook!***



One of the best ways to stay up-to-date on the cleanup work is to sign up for our Facebook page. Watch for two or three short posts a week. We invite you to check it out!

<https://www.facebook.com/CDAbasin>



***Learn More About the  
Coeur d'Alene Basin Cleanup  
on the Web***

[www.epa.gov/superfund/bunker-hill](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/bunker-hill)

